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DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Long a proponent of the right to development for all people, UNDP has advocated an integrated approach to enable people to meet their needs and enlarge their opportunities for education, health care, employment, a sound physical environment and economic and political participation. Over the past 40 years, UNDP has supported programmes for human development in more than 150 developing countries and territories. It responds to requests for technical assistance, helping countries develop the capacity to manage their economies; fight poverty, illiteracy and disease; conserve the environment; stimulate technological innovation; and enhance the contributions of women to society.

UNDP's Resident Representative in a particular field office is also usually the Resident Coordinator for the UN system in that country. This enables UNDP to assist the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies in coordinating the efforts of the UN family towards national strategic goals and priorities. This coordinating role has been especially evident in the area of human rights, where member states have increasingly requested technical assistance. Thus far, UNDP has provided technical assistance for peace-building, electoral support and institution-building. At the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, UNDP and the UN Centre for Human Rights (UNCHR) will present a joint paper on the lessons learned from their experiences providing technical assistance in support of development, human rights and democracy.

Peace-building

According to the Secretary-General's *An Agenda for Peace*, the UN system should work with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems of a conflict in order to prevent its recurrence. Towards this end, UNDP is collaborating with UN system partners on large-scale peace-building exercises in many countries. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/231, UNDP has been implementing the Special Plan for Economic Cooperation in Central America (PEC), to support the fulfilment of the Central American Peace Agreement and the achievement of stability in the region. There are three main programmes: for emergencies, immediate action, and economic reactivation and social development. The PEC has contributed to building consensus among Central American countries and has mobilized $US 1 billion during its first three years.

In order to support the national reconciliation process and the strengthening of democracy, UNDP has actively contributed to grassroots projects for displaced persons, returnees and refugees within the framework of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA). In a longer perspective, the Summit of Central American Presidents in Tegucigalpa in December 1991 concentrated on the themes of human development, children and youth, with support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO and other UN agencies. At this meeting the Heads of State approved National Action Plans with specific goals and, to reach human development objectives, reallocated budgetary resources totaling $US 500 million over three years.

UNDP also supports the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE), a health and agriculture programme of $US 155 million for war-affected populations in Central America.

In the framework of UN peace-building, UNDP contributed to the implementation of the El Salvador Peace Agreement and contracted international reconciliation experts to formulate a National Reconstruction Plan. UNDP has mobilized aid for reconstruction, provided emergency humanitarian relief and contributed technical and administrative expertise to new democratic institutions. UNDP has worked with other UN agencies and bilateral donors to provide vocational training for ex-combatants to help them make the transition into civil society.

In Cambodia, UNDP has supported the UNTAC operation by assisting urgent reintegration and rehabilitation of refugees during the transitional period. In preparation for the demobilization, UNDP and ILO have formulated an employment generation programme for ex-soldiers to provide vocational training and small business development, combined with credit schemes. A labour-intensive programme to re-

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pair roads and irrigation works is also under way.

Electoral assistance

Over the past two decades, UNDP has been asked by several countries to provide electoral assistance, working closely with the UN system and in particular the Electoral Assistance Unit (EAU). In countries like Algeria, Haiti, Nicaragua and Mexico, efforts have focused on strengthening the infrastructure necessary for general elections.

In recent years, support has been extended to provide training for public officials, voter education, legal advice and logistical assistance, and to establish and maintain voter lists, electronic data processing systems and voter counting technologies. Recipient countries have included Albania, Cambodia, Guyana and Ethiopia.

In Burundi, Ghana and Romania, UNDP financed needs assessment missions and provided experts on voter registration and printing of ballots for elections. In El Salvador, international experts funded by UNDP worked with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to build voter participation and prevent fraud for elections due in March 1994.

In addition to extending technical assistance, UNDP has established an Electoral Administration Project to facilitate missions to donor countries and recipient states. The aim is to create a network so that experience in electoral assistance can be shared. Working closely with the UN's EAU, UNDP has also set up an Electoral Trust Fund, which supports needs assessment missions, workshops, studies and networking.

Institution-building

UNDP responds to country requests for support to the democratization process. Jointly with UNCHR, UNDP has funded technical assistance in constitutional reform and electoral processes in Albania, Colombia and Paraguay. In Colombia, UNDP and UNCHR have worked with the Government on the modernization of the judicial system. This involved establishing a General Prosecutor for Human Rights, strengthening the Attorney General's office and creating permanent human rights offices in areas where mass violations could occur.

In Albania and Djibouti, UNDP is supporting programmes to build an independent media. In Paraguay, UNDP, UNCHR and the UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs arranged for a colloquium and an international expert to assist the Attorney General's office in incorporating international human rights instruments in the new constitution and reviewing the penal code and the penal process. In Honduras and Guatemala, support has been given to an Office for the Commissioner for Human Rights, which is responsible for the defence, protection and promotion of human rights.

In many countries, UNDP has supported and co-funded vocational training, management courses and human rights seminars for civil servants, lawyers, police forces, grassroots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In Haiti, UNDP helped NGOs create teaching materials on human rights, which were used in training courses for civilians and military personnel.

In Mozambique, UNDP has assisted the Government in developing a decentralization plan which could contribute to political stability and economic growth. The plan includes training in public administration and strengthening the management capacity of provincial governments.

Development and human rights

The link between human rights and development has become increasingly prominent in international debate and is likely to be much discussed at the World Conference. Development assistance aims at redressing inequity by providing opportunities for those who would otherwise be deprived. Introducing human rights into development ensures that development serves people rather than the other way around. It is now recognized that development is more likely to be sustainable when people are free to articulate their needs and interests, and to formulate and implement programmes to address them. Participation in decision-making, including decisions on resource utilization, is part of the human rights and development continuum. Suggestions on how to create an enabling environment for human development and other connected issues are addressed in UNDP's annual *Human Development Report*, which underlines the importance of linking social and economic growth in a holistic approach to development.

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